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AUTHOR Schores, Daniel M.
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ABSTRACT

Designed to discover the influence of rapidly increasing commercial recreation on social interaction, this study dealt with the nature and changing significance of community institutions. The study was conducted from 1963 to 1965 in the emerging community of Osage Beach, Missouri, as a basis for the author's doctoral dissertation. Data for the study were obtained from observation of the community over a 3-year period, historical records, and interviews with a 25 percent random sample of all household (N=77). Findings of the study were that the institutions (schools, churches, government, and voluntary associations) of the community were strongly influenced by newcomers who were attracted to a rural recreation environment. By attempting to recreate their familiar urban culture, the newcomers created social dissonance between themselves and the more traditionally rural natives of the community. (TL)

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INSTITUTIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF RECENT URBAN TO RURAL MIGRATION IN A RESORT COMMUNITY

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Dr. Daniel M. Schores
Duke Divinity School
Durham, North Carolina

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INSTITUTIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF RECENT URBAN TO RURAL MIGRATION IN A RESORT COMMUNITY

While the resort community has become increasingly common in the United States in recent years along with the phenomenal growth of tourism in general, sociologists have been negligent in studying these functionally unique communities. Research which exists has focused on the leisure-consumer rather than on the service-provider. Attention has been primarily given to the individual in a traditional, stable community, most likely a metropolitan center.[1] Unfulfilled has been the need for understanding the effect of a leisure environment on the social organization of the area visited by these leisure-consumers. Yet new communities, born in formerly isolated rural areas, give social scientists a significant opportunity to observe the rise of basic institutions amid a transient population.

Previous studies have shown that it is the urban dweller who vacations most frequently. For example, a federal government analysis of outdoor recreation in 1962 found that families living in suburbia or the fringe of a metropolitan center had higher participation rates than either the inner-city dweller or out-lying rural family.[2] On the other hand, the resort area is normally rural in location. It can therefore be expected that native-newcomer conflicts will appear in interpersonal relations with concurrent effect on social institutions.

From 1963-1965 a study of the emerging community of Osage Beach, Missouri on the Lake of the Ozarks was conducted by the author. Designed to discover the influence of rapidly increasing commercial recreation on social interaction, the study explored the nature and changing significance of community institutions. A major factor in

change was found to be the displacement of rural-oriented "natives" by urban-oriented "newcomers." This paper presents the findings of the study which relate to institutional consequences of this migration. Institutions dealt with include government, school, church and voluntary associations.

THEORY: Social stratification theory provides the conceptual framework. The social standing or prestige of a person in his group or community is his "status," and the expression of status which has reference to the degree of prestige, privilege or power as compared to others in the group is one's "status rank." One's status rank is derived from the sum of his personal achievements, ascribed qualities, and roles he has played in the past. Once assigned a status rank, the individual is expected to be and to do that which is in accord with such a status.

In order to gain an understanding of what Osage Beach would have been without its tourist economy, the control community of nearby Wheatland, Missouri, ("Plainville, U.S.A." in sociological literature) was also studied.[3] Institutional differences between the communities, similar thirty-five years ago, were attributed to changes in economy and population associated with the creation of the resort lake. Gallaher in Plainville, Fifteen Years Later, hypothesized that economic changes are "accompanied by structural changes in the status ranking systems of the community"[4] but failed to specify the direction these changes would take. Urban immigrants and tourists are theoretically assumed in this study to affect the status ranking system, creating an urban, associationally patterned structure. This urbanizing influence has been noted in other resort studies.[5]

METHODOLOGY: In 1963 Osage Beach was an unincorporated community with approximately a thousand full-time residents. Because of its proximity to the large urban centers of Kansas City, St. Louis and Chicago, more than 9000 overnight guests added to the daily summer population, staying in private cottage, camp site, luxury resort, motel, or simple "fishing camp."

The author engaged in participant observation over a three year period. Historical records were studied for organizations and for the community since its founding in 1929. Meetings of voluntary associations, government, churches and school were attended. Interviews were had with a twenty-five percent random sample of all households (N=77). The study was the basis for a doctoral dissertation at the University of Missouri.

FINDINGS: First, it is necessary to establish that the Osage Beach population is of increasing urban background. Table I reveals that most Osage Beach residents have lived there less than ten years (62.3 percent). Quite the opposite was true for Plainville, the control community.

Not only has this resort area witnessed more mobility than typical of rural communities in general, Table II shows that a signifi cant proportion of these immigrants are from urban areas. In terms of the size of community of immediate prior residence, 70.1 percent of the families had lived in places of 2,500 or more population. In fact, over half (53.2 percent) were from standard metropolitan statistical areas. Familiarity with urban services, urban institutions, commercial value systems, higher living levels and varieties of cultural patterns was found to be influential in the status ranking system of the lake area.

TABLE I -- LENGTH OF RESIDENCY IN OSAGE BEACH, MISSOURI BY HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS

LENGTH OF RESIDENCY	HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS Number	Percent
Less than 12 months	6	7.8
12 to 23 months	3	3.9
24-to 35 months	4	5.2
3 to 4.9 years	8	10.4
5 to 9.9 years	27	35.0
10 to 14.9 years	4	5.2
15 to 24.9 years	10	13.0
25 years or more	15	19.5
TOTAL:	77	100.0

TABLE II -- HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS IN OSAGE BEACH, MISSOURI BY POPULATION SIZE OF PLACE OF PRIOR RESIDENCE

SIZE OF COMMUNITY OF IMMEDIATE PRIOR RESIDENCE	HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS Number	Percent
Open country (under 100 population)	14	18.2
Village (100-999 population)	3	3.9
Small town (1,000-2,499 population)	6	7.8
TOTAL RURAL:	(23	29.9)
Large town (2,500-9,999 population)	5	6.5
Small city (10,000-49,999 population)	8	10.4
Small metropolitan center (50,000-249,999)	9	11.7
Large metropolitan center (250,000+ population)	32	41.5
TOTAL URBAN:	(54	70.1)
TOTAL:	77	100.0

In addition to information on their last place of residence, an analysis was done comparing the "native"--persons living in the lake area for at least twenty-five years, with the "newcomer"--those persons with at least two years but less than twenty-five years residence. "Recent arrivals" of less than two years are omitted since the local feeling is that a person is regarded as transient until having weathered two tourist seasons.

Hypotheses were stated to determine significant differences in urban orientation between the native and newcomer (N=15 and N=53 respectively). Results were as follows: Newcomers had a significantly higher educational attainment (X^2=15.91, 5 d.f., P<.01). Newcomers had a mean income of $ 6326 as compared to $ 4650 for natives, though this was not a significant difference. In terms of religious affiliation, newcomers had the only Roman Catholics (15.1 percent of the total newcomers), as well as more widespread denominational representation among Protestants. A smaller proportion of natives were in business than were newcomers (X^2=6.78, 1 d.f., P<.01). Newcomers enjoyed a higher level of living as determined by a Chafin-type index (P <.01). The newcomer was more likely to visit a metropolitan center twice or more annually than was the native (P < .05). In fact, the only point at which the native appeared to have a greater urban orientation was that they subscribed to daily metropolitan newspapers to a slightly greater degree than did the newcomers (not significant). From this evidence, as well as by personal observation, the new migrants tend to be more urban than are those they have gradually displaced.

Several general trends were obvious in Osage Beach as a result of the urban to rural migration flow. The source of income in the community went from subsistence agriculture to catering to tourists. In terms of economic organization the change was from material production to an emphasis on the provision of personal services. In the realm of values the switch was away from traditional mountaineer ideals of thrift, hard work and stern application of moral codes to a position more in harmony with our national society.

Status ranking criteria, a major concern of the study, became more urban over the period of the lake's formation and tourist development. These criteria are now multi-dimensional. Three primary elements appear to be involved in the status ranking system: occupation, economic level, and social participation in ascending order of importance. The evaluation of occupations follows closely the North-Hatt rank scale with the exception that farm-related occupations rank much lower than is true in other communities studied. Family income and a scale-determined level of living comprise the element of "economic level." Not as obvious immediately after a new resident arrives, the economic factor gradually assumes a position of greater influence in status rank determination than that of occupation. The most important criteria for judging status rank in Osage Beach is the extent of social participation. To achieve higher status one must be known by others. Active participation in group endeavors is the accepted means of becoming favorably known and respected. Most informants claim it is the only way to"work your way into" a position of high prestige. Apparently the activity of

any member of the household has what may be called a "halo"effect on the household head. Especially do the wife's social activities reflect favorably upon her husband.

Voluntary associations, including the church, have become major factors in status ascription whereas traditional institutions such as government, family and school have declined in importance. This finding is in direct contrast to Plainville where school, family and politics are of major concern.

SCHOOL: The school system in Osage Beach consists of a four teacher local elementary unit plus a large consolidated secondary unit at the county seat, ten miles away. The older local school building is now being replaced due to expanding enrollment. Disagreement over educational goals appear between native and newcomer especially at the point of new school bonds. Six attempts were required before a large bond issue passed across the school district. Though Osage Beach itself voted heavily in favor each time, opposition came from natives living back from the lake shore and to some extent from retired persons who disliked an increase in taxes.

Urban newcomers tend to upgrade the quality of instruction and variety of subjects taught (for instance, the special music program now offered). Teachers are increasingly outsiders themselves rather than local women as in the past. However, the school claims little loyalty from newcomers who never attended there (in sharp contrast to the local pride in Plainville's school). School activities attract only parents in contrast to community-wide functions in Plainville. The Parent-Teacher's Association receives scant support from native families, even those with children, possibly because its monthly

programs are aimed more at understanding new educational philisophy (more of an urban interest?) than being a social gathering.

GOVERNMENT: The institution of government has felt the impact of the urban immigrant even more than the school. Formerly a predominant Repblican stronghold, a Democratic majority among the swelling ranks of newcomers has moved the community to a middle-of-the-road position politically. There is, however, little active political interest for either party in Osage Beach as compared with the remainder of the county. Primary relations with county politicians are not considered a mark of prestige as in Plainville.

Urban immigration has hastened the community's acceptance of extracommunity influence over internal affairs, especially in governmental functions. Health regulations are imposed by the state, the U.S. Coast Guard inspects boats, federal agencies make small business loans in return for adherence to required business practices, public accommodation regulations are set in part by the U.S. Congress, and police protection comes either through the county sheriff or state highway patrol. In sundry ways outsiders play an increasing role in the community's affairs much to the consternation of old-time native residents. The personal link between outside agencies and local needs are, without an exception, high status newcomers. Agitation for incorporation came primarily from new people who desired more regulation and/or protection in fire and police services, liquor control and sanitation. By 1965 the community was incorporated for the second time--the first being in 1960 when a legal mixup over incorporation-disincorporation caused considerable ill will.

CHURCH: Religious services are held year-round at the Baptist

and Methodist churches with Sunday worship during summer months at the drive-in theater sponsored by the Missouri Synod Lutherans. Churches of several other denominations exist near Osage Beach.

The Baptist and Methodist churches offer a specific opportunity to view the effect of urban newcomers on program and activities of an institution. Both churches are continuations of pre-lake rural congregations; both are well organized yet have small memberships; both have new air-conditioned buildings. There the similarity ends! The Baptist church mainly serves the native or rural newcomer (33.3 percent of the natives are Baptist compared to 11.3 percent of the newcomers who are). They resist adjustments to summer tourists, for instance by not offering multiple morning services. Several members interviewed, including the minister, openly condemned value changes brought about by the heterogenity of the community. Structure is informal with heavy emphasis on personal involvement.

Socio-economic characteristics of Methodist members parellel those of the newcomer (only 17.4 percent of the Methodists in the sample were natives). Besides attracting tourist-oriented business people, this church also reaches a high share of tourists and the retired immigrants. As many as four services are held each Sunday morning, some especially advertised for tourists. Urban newcomers have encouraged variety in program content, formality in worship, a highly sophisticated musical program, and a delegated organizational structure.

As was true with government functions, the church has witnessed a rise in non-local influence and control. In the case of these

congregations this was noticeable in salary supplements, building grants, dependence upon visitors for summer attendance, and statewide publicity. Increased contact with non-local denominational activities is particularly noticeable among Methodists.

The desire to participate in social organizations, commented on earlier as a status ranking factor, likewise affects church activities. In fact, the church is regarded as a most influential institution in the community. One informant stated:

> I've been surprised at the influence the church has in the community, especially as a social center. The church takes the place of other organizations for the retired person. It has become the center of <u>our</u> lives as never before.

VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS: Voluntary associations are numerous and varied in Osage Beach, though not typical of surrounding rural-oriented communities such as Plainville. Absent are farm groups or extension clubs. Even the local garden club has died out. In their place are civic and business-professional organizations such as the Lions, Marine Dealer's Association, and Chamber of Commerce. Scout groups replace 4-H clubs of earlier years. Such "urban" types as bowling leagues, coin club, and two Beta Sigma Phi chapters cater to local preferences.

Numerous consequences of the influence of urban newcomers could be cited: the higher average education among newcomers provides better quality leaders for the organization willing to use their talents (a median educational attainment of 12:2 for newcomers as compared to 6.0 for natives); cross cultural contacts bring new ideas into these voluntary associations; greater participation in statewide and regional associations; "getting things done" is the goal of

most groups rather than a passive fellowship. Low status households, primarily native families, are not proportionally represented in any organization. Another point of adaptation to the lake environment is that activity ceases during the tourist season as the entire community mobilizes for the vacationing visitor.

Summarizing: the study of Osage Beach, Missouri, reveals that this resort community's institutions are strongly influenced by newcomers who are attracted to a rural recreation environment from their former urban places of residence. As a whole, they have attempted to recreate the urban culture with which they are familiar, causing social dissonance between themselves and the more traditionally rural native. Now a majority of the population, the ways of these urban-oriented newcomers are seldom seriously questioned with the result that the lake area now appears to be an urbanized region of low population density with institutions more characteristic of metropolitan centers than of the surrounding rural communities.

FOOTNOTES

[1] George A. Lundberg, M. Momarovsky, and M. A. McIrney, Leisure: A Suburban Study (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934); Saxon Graham, "Social Correlates of Adult Leisure Time Behavior," in M.B. Sussman, Community Structure and Analysis (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1959), pp. 331-354; Alfred C. Clarke, "The Use of Leisure and Its Relation to Levels of Occupational Prestige," American Sociological Review, 23, 1, June 1956, pp. 301-307; R. Havighurst and K. Feigenbaum, "Leisure and Life-Style," American Journal of Sociology, 64, 4, January 1959, pp. 396-404; R. Clyde White, "Social Class Differences in the Uses of Leisure," American Journal of Sociology, 61, 2, September 1955, pp. 145-150; Lawrence C. Thomas, "Leisure Pursuits by Socio-Economic Strata," Journal of Educational Sociology, 29, 9, May 1956, pp. 367-377.

[2] Outdoor Recreation for America, A Report to the President and the Congress by the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1962), p. 218. Also note a 1952 recreation study which discovered that "urban people made use of the established areas about three times as often as did the rural groups," Recreation Today and Tomorrow: A Survey of the Recreation Resources of the Missouri River Basin (Washington: Department of the Interior, 1955).

[3] James West (Carl Withers), Plainville, U.S.A. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945); Art Gallaher, Plainville, Fifteen Years Later (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961).

[4] Ibid., p. 8.

[5] Millard Faught, Falmouth, Massachusetts: Problems of a Resort Community (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945): H. Clifton Hutchins and A. F. Wileden, "Washington Island: Challenge and Opportunity," No. 4, Community Series, University of Wisconsin, Madison, September 1962.